

CHAPTER 11



Educational Status of Children Aged 7–14 Years

E ducation is one of the principal determinants of the economic and social development of a country. The last surveys conducted in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras presented an opportunity to provide basic information on the education system of these countries from a population-based perspective. With this objective, the individual questionnaire included a module of questions regarding school attendance by the respondents' own children aged 7–14. For each child in the appropriate age range, the mother was asked if the child had ever attended school, the age at which he/she began first grade, the highest grade completed, and whether the child was attending in the current school year. For those children not in school, the mother was asked the age when the child last attended and his/her reason for leaving school.

Tables 11.1 thru 11.3 give a profile of school attendance during the current school year for El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras, respectively. The children were classified in the following four categories: Those who had

never attended school; those who had dropped out of school system; those who were currently attending a grade lower than expected for their age; and those who were attending a grade equal to or higher than the one expected for their age.

Table 11.1 Educational Status of Children Aged 7–14 Years, According to Selected Characteristics: El Salvador, 2002/03					
Selected Characteristics	Never Attended	Dropped Out	In Grade Less Than Expected	In Expected Grade or Higher	Total
Total	5.6	6.0	26.7	61.7	100.0
Area of Residence					
Urban	4.1	3.9	19.9	72.1	100.0
Rural	7.1	7.9	33.0	51.9	100.0
Sex					
Male	5.8	5.3	29.0	59.9	100.0
Female	5.5	6.7	24.1	63.7	100.0
Age					
7	14.6	0.7	0.0	84.7	100.0
8	7.0	1.2	19.4	72.4	100.0
9	3.8	1.8	27.7	66.7	100.0
10	4.3	2.6	34.9	58.2	100.0
11	3.2	4.3	34.9	57.6	100.0
12	3.6	8.5	35.8	52.1	100.0
13	3.0	13.1	35.8	48.2	100.0
14	3.6	20.4	32.0	44.1	100.0
Education of Mother					
None	11.6	10.8	39.9	37.7	100.0
1-3	6.2	8.2	33.5	52.1	100.0
4-6	3.9	5.0	26.9	64.2	100.0
7-9	2.4	2.7	15.7	79.2	100.0
10+	2.4	0.7	8.7	88.1	100.0
No. of Siblings					
0-1	2.8	2.6	14.3	80.3	100.0
2-3	4.9	4.5	22.7	67.9	100.0
4-6	6.5	7.8	36.4	49.3	100.0
7+	11.6	13.8	42.9	31.6	100.0

Table 11.2
Educational Status of Children Aged 7–14 Years, According to Selected
Characteristics: Guatemala, 2002

Selected Characteristics	Never Attended	Dropped Out	In Grade Less Than Expected	In Expected Grade or Higher	Total
Total	7.8	9.8	27.8	54.5	100.0
Area of Residence					
Urban	5.0	6.5	20.8	67.8	100.0
Rural	9.5	11.7	31.8	47.0	100.0
Sex					
Male	6.2	8.7	30.4	54.7	100.0
Female	9.7	11.0	24.9	54.4	100.0
Age					
7	12.1	0.9	0.0	87.0	100.0
8	9.8	1.9	20.8	67.5	100.0
9	7.1	2.5	31.9	58.6	100.0
10	6.5	4.5	38.5	50.5	100.0
11	7.1	7.2	38.7	47.0	100.0
12	5.2	18.0	35.5	41.4	100.0
13	7.5	25.1	32.4	35.0	100.0
14	5.5	35.7	30.2	28.6	100.0
Education of Mother					
None	14.1	13.5	38.2	34.2	100.0
Primary	3.9	8.6	24.3	63.3	100.0
Secondary+	0.2	1.8	5.7	92.3	100.0
No. of Siblings					
0-1	2.9	2.8	12.4	81.9	100.0
2-3	4.5	5.7	18.0	71.8	100.0
4-6	9.2	12.6	34.2	44.1	100.0
7+	12.8	14.4	38.6	34.2	100.0

Table 11.3
Educational Status of Children Aged 7–14 Years, According to Selected Characteristics: Honduras, 2001

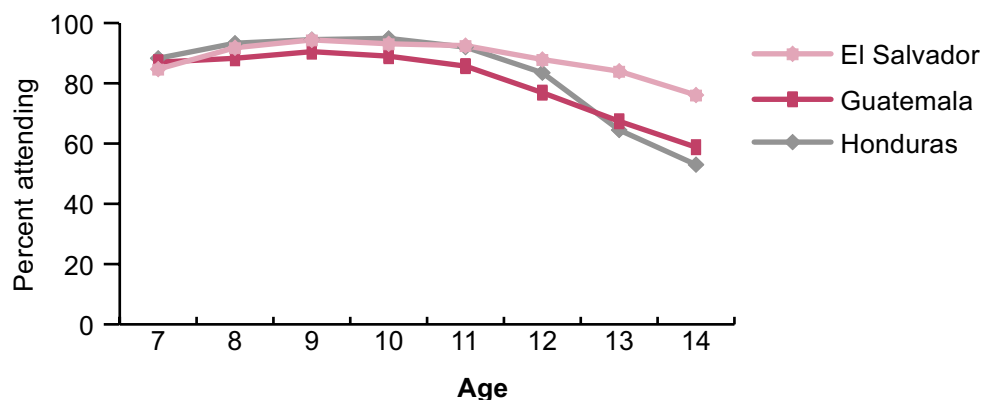
Selected Characteristics	Never Attended	Dropped Out	In Grade Less Than Expected	In Expected Grade or Higher	Total
Total	3.9	10.7	26.1	59.3	100.0
Area of Residence					
Urban	2.6	5.5	19.8	72.1	100.0
Rural	4.8	14.3	30.5	50.5	100.0
Sex					
Male	3.8	11.4	27.9	56.9	100.0
Female	3.9	9.9	24.3	61.9	100.0
Age					
7	10.1	1.6	0.0	88.3	100.0
8	4.7	2.0	19.9	73.4	100.0
9	2.3	3.3	29.2	65.3	100.0
10	2.3	2.7	36.3	58.6	100.0
11	1.6	6.4	34.9	57.1	100.0
12	2.6	13.9	38.7	44.8	100.0
13	2.5	32.9	27.8	36.7	100.0
14	3.5	43.5	28.2	24.8	100.0
Education of Mother					
None	10.1	16.6	39.4	34.0	100.0
1-3	4.8	14.6	34.0	46.6	100.0
4-6	1.6	8.8	21.7	67.9	100.0
7+	0.4	1.9	8.0	89.8	100.0
No. of Siblings					
0-1	1.9	2.2	11.7	84.1	100.0
2-3	2.1	6.6	19.2	72.0	100.0
4-6	4.5	13.8	31.9	49.8	100.0
7+	7.7	18.8	38.7	34.8	100.0

Graphs 11.1 and 11.2 also provide summary information on school attendance in the most recent school year (2001 in Honduras and 2002 in El Salvador and Guatemala). As seen in Graph 11.1 school attendance for children ages 7 thru 11 is very similar in El Salvador and Honduras, but starting with age 12 children in Honduras are more likely to leave school such that by age 13 a smaller proportion of Honduran children are in school than in Guatemala.

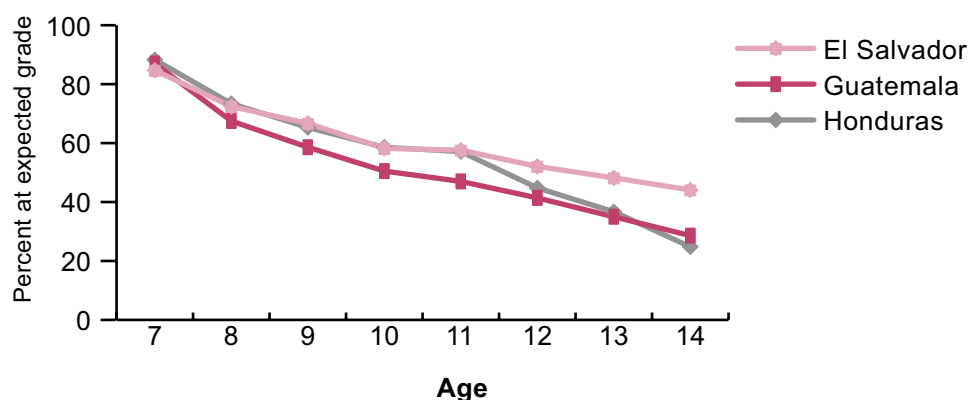
Overall, 61.7 percent of the children aged 7–14 years in El Salvador, 54.5 percent of the children in Guatemala, and 59.3 percent of the children

in Honduras were attending the grade expected or higher, and 38.3, 45.5, and 40.7 percent, respectively, had experienced one or more of three barriers to timely school attainment—late entry, dropping out, or not progressing to successive grades (Tables 11.1, 11.2, and 11.3). The relative importance of these three factors is better appreciated by considering the distribution of the school age population across these categories at different ages. Using El Salvador as an example (Table 11.1), among 7 year-olds, 84.7 percent were attending the expected grade or higher, but this declines considerably to just

Graph 11.1
Percent Attending School by Age at Start of School Year
(Most Recent Survey)



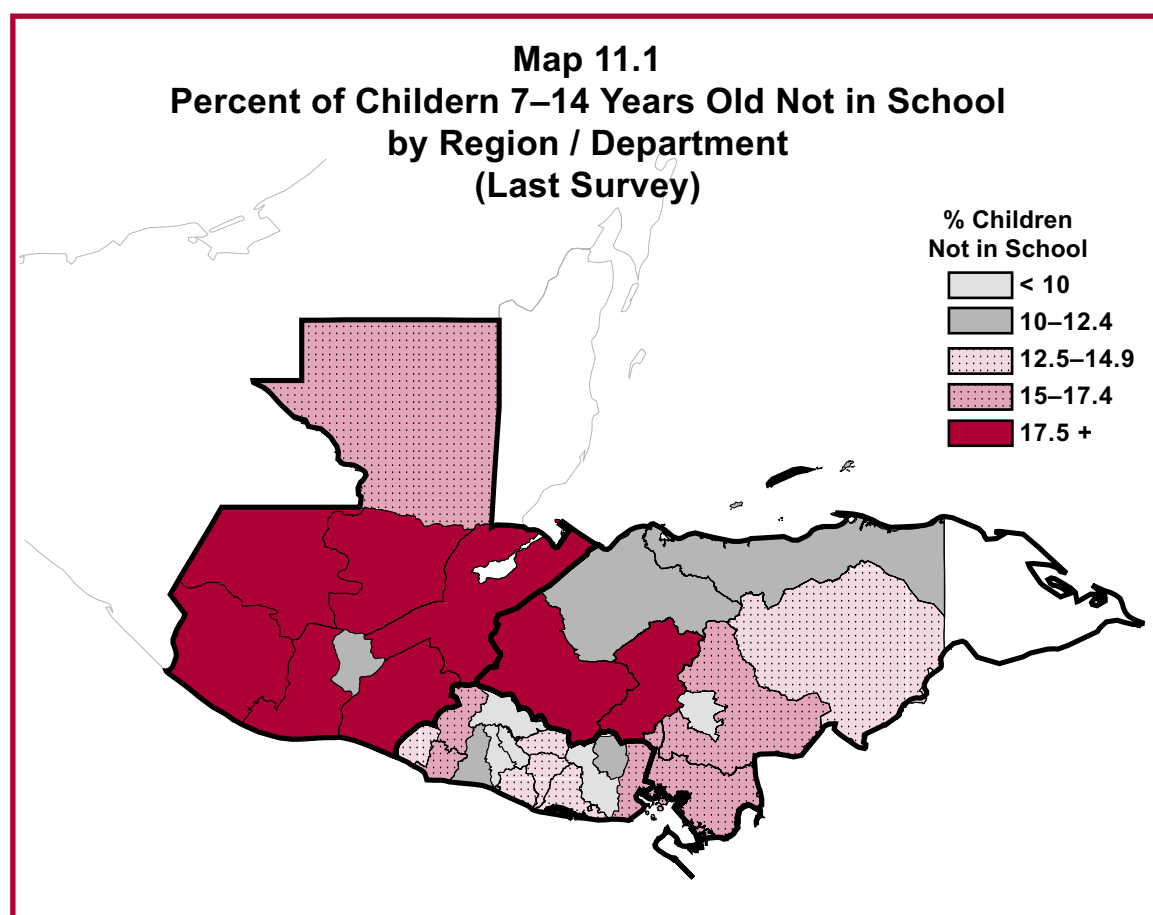
Graph 11.2
Percent Attending Expected Grade or Higher for Their Age,
by Age at Start of School Year
(Most Recent Survey)



44.1 percent of 14 year olds. The corresponding statistics for Guatemala and Honduras are 87.0 and 28.6 percent (Table 11.2), and 88.3 and 24.8 (Table 11.3) percent, respectively.

In El Salvador, school abandonment becomes important above age 11, while in Guatemala and Honduras it becomes important above age 10. Using Honduras as an example (Table 11.3), school abandonment rises quickly from 6.4 percent of 11 year-olds to 43.5 percent of 14 year-olds.

In all three countries, rural children fare worse than urban children on all four categories. With respect to gender, in El Salvador and Honduras, girls seem to fare better than boys, while in Guatemala the opposite appears to be the case. It important to note that children with well-educated mothers and with few siblings are considerably more likely to have attended school, stayed in school, and to have been attending the expected grade level or higher.



Map 11.1 provides sub-national estimates of the percent of children ages 7–14 not attending school and Map 11.2 provides estimates of the percent delayed in grade for age. The problem of children not being in school (either because they never entered or have dropped out) is most pronounced throughout Guatemala and in the western part of Honduras. Children delayed in grade for age (either because they started late or have had to repeat one or more grades) are a more widespread problem throughout the three

countries. Most departments (or regions) have at least 25 percent of children in this age range who are attending a lower grade than expected for their age.

An important factor associated with attending a grade lower than expected for age and the abandonment of school is repetition of grades. As shown in Table 11.4, the percentage of children repeating a grade during the current school year ranged from 13.6 percent in El Salvador to 22.9 percent in Guatemala.

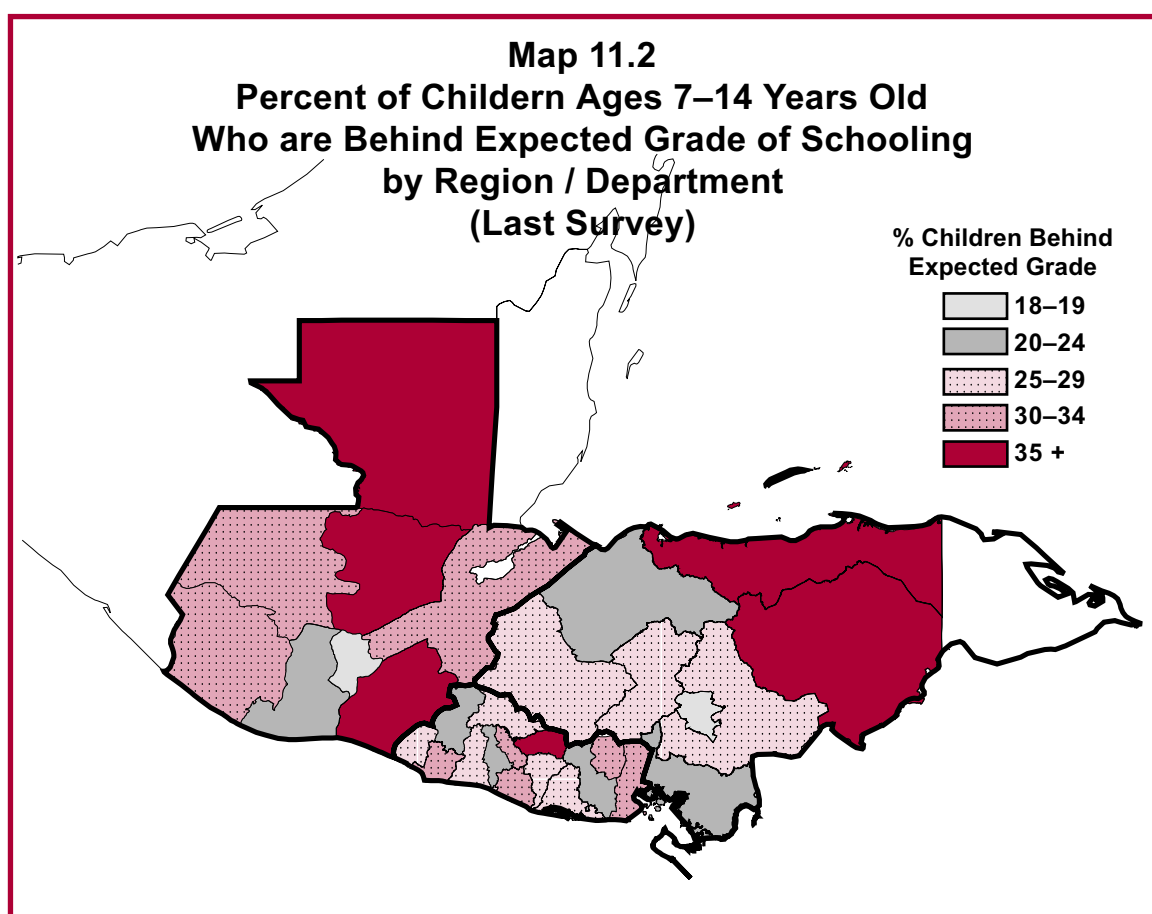


Table 11.4
Percentage of Children Repeating a
Grade During the Year of the Survey,
According to Age at Beginning of
School Year: Children Aged 7–14 Who
Were Attending School
(Most Recent Survey)

Age	El Salvador 2002	Guatemala 2002	Honduras 2001
Total	13.6	22.9	20.5
7	8.9	23.5	19.5
8	15.0	27.3	23.5
9	15.7	25.0	22.6
10	17.5	25.2	22.9
11	15.4	24.4	19.8
12	13.2	19.4	19.0
13	10.7	15.1	15.0
14	10.3	12.4	14.0

Table 11.5 presents information on reasons given by the mother for children leaving school for children aged 7–14 years who had attended school, but did not attend in the current school year. The three most important reasons in each country were: “Didn’t want to study anymore,” “economic problems,” and “poor grades.” The order of these reasons varied from country to country. Less frequently mentioned reasons in each country included “had to work” and “problems in school.”

Table 11.5		
Primary Reasons For Dropping Out of School Children Aged 7–14 Who Have Dropped Out of School		
Country/Reason	Year of Survey	Percentage
El Salvador	2002/03	
Didn’t want to study anymore		32.2
Economic problems		19.7
Poor grades		11.1
Family problems		9.2
Problems in the school		6.2
Had to work		5.3
Guatemala	2002	
Economic problems		29.0
Didn’t want to study anymore		25.7
Poor grades		12.3
Had to work		7.2
Problems in the school		4.7
Honduras	2001	
Economic problems		27.0
Poor grades		15.9
Didn’t want to study anymore		15.0
No higher grades taught		8.4
Problems in the school		6.6
Had to work		5.1

Summary of Findings

- Over 82 percent of all children aged 7–14 years in each country were attending school during the current school year, but only 55 to 62 percent were either at their expected grade level or in one more advanced. The remaining proportions had experienced at least one of the barriers to normal progression within the education system (started late, dropped out, or did not progress through the grades as expected). The percentage of children who were not in school (either had never been or had dropped out) increases in El Salvador from 6.9 percent among children 10 years of age to 24.0 percent among children 14 years of age, from 11.0 to 41.2 percent in Guatemala, and from 5.0 to 47.0 percent in Honduras.
- In general, school abandonment becomes important around 10 to 11 years of age.
- Repetition of grades appears to be an important factor associated with abandoning school.
- Children with better-educated mothers and with fewer siblings are considerably more likely to have attended school, stayed in school, and to have been attending the expected grade level or higher.
- The three most important reasons in each country for abandoning school included “didn’t want to study anymore,” “economic problems,” and “poor grades.”